



BLM News

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Six California firefighters injured in burnover

Six wildland firefighters from an Eldorado National Forest hotshot crew were injured late Tuesday afternoon during a wildland fire burnover. The crew was assigned to the New York Peak Fire northwest of Winnemucca, Nevada, when the burnover occurred at approximately 5 p.m.

Three of the injured firefighters were flown by helicopter from the incident to the Humboldt General Hospital in Winnemucca. Two of these firefighters were subsequently flown by fixed wing aircraft to the Lion's Burn Care Center at the University of Nevada Las Vegas. The third injured firefighter was treated and released from the hospital in Winnemucca. The remaining three injured firefighters were driven to the hospital in Winnemucca, where they were treated and released.

The Eldorado National Forest is located near Placerville, California.

A federal interagency serious accident investigation team is scheduled to arrive in Winnemucca Wednesday afternoon to conduct a review of the incident. "Whenever injuries such as these occur during firefighting operations, a top priority is to learn everything we can about them so that we can work to prevent similar incidents from happening again," said BLM Nevada State Fire Management Officer Rex McKnight.

According to preliminary reports, the burnover occurred during burnout operations. The fire was started by lightning at approximately 6:25 p.m. on Monday. The New York Peak Fire was reassigned to the Jim Thomas Type 2 Incident Management Team at 10 p.m. Tuesday.

The fire is burning at the south end of the Pine Forest Range in juniper, mountain mahogany, sagebrush and cheatgrass 65 miles northwest of Winnemucca, and has exhibited extreme fire conditions in rough terrain. The fire is located in a wilderness study area with limited vehicle access. There are 109 firefighters assigned to the fire.

The hotshot crew has been taken off the fire pending investigation into the incident. Preliminary reports indicate that more than 6,000 acres have been burned by the New York Peak Fire. Containment figures are unavailable at this time.